

### REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed on May 3, 2006. Claims 1-19 were pending in that action. All claims were rejected. With the present response, claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, 10, 13, 15, 17 and 19 are amended. Claims 11, 12, 14, 16 and 18 are canceled. The remaining claims are unchanged.

Beginning on page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objected to Applicant's drawings. With the present response, Applicant has amended the description of the invention at page 9, line 10 in order to remedy the issues underlying the drawing objection. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully solicited.

On page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. With the present response, this claim has been canceled. Also, the Examiner rejected claims 12, 14, 16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §101. With the present response, these claims have been canceled.

Beginning on page 4 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 13-16 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application 2004/0078366 (hereinafter referred to as "the Crooks reference"). Claims 13, 15 and 19 are independent claims. Claims 14 and 16 are canceled with the present response. For reasons that will be discussed in detail below, it is respectfully submitted that claims 13, 15 and 19 are patentably distinguishable from the Crooks reference.

Independent claim 13 recites a method for making additional terms available to a searching process (emphasis added). As claimed, an input string is received and incorporates a plurality of characters separated by at least one hyphen. The hyphen is removed so as to form at least one additional term. In order to emphasize one feature of the claim that is neither taught nor suggested in the Crooks reference, Applicant has amended claim 13 to make it clear that the additional term is provided to the searching process along with the received input string.

In contrast, the Crooks reference discloses a method for transforming an input string into an alternate string for searching purposes. For example, FIG. 2 of the Crooks reference (and all related description) shows altering an input string by making certain proscribed

modifications, which may include elimination of a hyphen. However, in no way does the Crooks reference teach or suggest providing the input string along with the so-called “normalized” string to a searching process. Accordingly, for at least this reason, it is respectfully submitted that claim 13 is patentably distinguishable from the reference cited against it.

Claim 15 is similarly distinguishable from the cited Crooks reference. Claim 15 also recites a method for making additional terms available to a searching process (emphasis added). In this case, an additional term is formed by “replacing [a] hyphen with a space.” The created additional term is provided to a search engine along with an input string from which the additional term was derived.

Again, the Crooks reference simply fails to teach or suggest retention of the input string to be submitted as a search term, along with the so-called normalized variation, to a search engine. Accordingly, for at least this reason, claim 15 is patentably distinguishable from the reference cited against it.

Finally, claim 19 is similar to claims 15 and 17 in that an input string is provided to a searching process along with an additional term generated by performing an operation on the input string. As has been discussed, the Crooks reference simply fails to teach or suggest such a feature. For at least this reason, claim 19 is patentably distinguishable from the reference cited against it.

Beginning on page 7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1-8 and claims 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,027,987 (hereinafter referred to as “the Franz reference”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,393,399 (hereinafter referred to as “the Even reference”). Claims 11 and 12 are cancelled with the present response. Of the remaining claims, claim 1 is independent and the other claims are dependent thereon. At least for reasons that will be discussed below in detail, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1-8 and 10 are patentably distinguishable from the cited references considered independently or in combination.

Independent claim 1 recites a method for making additional terms available to a searching process (emphasis added). The claimed method includes receiving an input string that

incorporates a plurality of characters separated by at least one space. An additional term is formed by concatenating the plurality of characters. As claimed, the input string and its related additional term are provided to the search process.

It is respectfully submitted that the cited references, considered independently or in combination, simply fail to teach or suggest providing a concatenated input string to a searching process along with the input string itself. The only cited source of concatenation is in the Even reference at column 4, lines 18-26. Notably, this passage teaches a transformation of separate input terms into a single combined input term. It is the Examiner's argument that it would be obvious to apply this transformation of compound terms to the compound terms generated in the Franz reference at column 8, lines 51-66.

It is respectfully pointed out that even if the transformation taught in the Even reference were applied to the identification of compound terms described in the Franz reference, there is still absolutely no teaching or suggestion in either reference that a non-transformed term should be advanced to a searching process along with the transformed version. The Franz reference describes turning separate search terms into compound search terms. The Even reference describes transforming separate search terms into a concatenated search term. However, in both cases, it is a transformation that is taught and not a generation of an additional search term. For at least this reason, independent claim 1 is patentably distinguishable from the references cited against it. Further, dependent claims 2-8 and 10, which were similarly rejected, are patentably distinguishable at least for the same reasons as their associated independent claim.

This is not to say that the dependent claims do not individually contain allowable subject matter. For example, dependent claim 3 specifically limits the first and second sets of characters to being each a single character. In rejecting this claim element, the Examiner supports Applicant's case for patentability by essentially pointing out that there is nothing in the cited references to teach or suggest application in the context of a single character in each set of characters. Because there is no teaching or suggestion in the cited references, a claim element is missing from the cited references and a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established. For at least this reason, dependent claim 3 is believed to be in allowable form based on the merits

of its own limitations. This is just one example of a dependent claim believed to be independently distinguishable from the references cited against it.

Beginning on page 11 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejected dependent claim 9 as being unpatentable over the Franz reference in view of the Even reference and further in view of an article related to college algebra (hereinafter referred to as “the College Algebra reference”). Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claim 9 is allowable by virtue of its dependency from allowable independent claim 1. Additionally, Applicants respectfully submit that dependent claim 9 is allowable regardless of the patentability of the claim from which it depends. Applicant has amended dependent claim 9 in order to better distinguish it from the references cited against it. In particular, dependent claim 9 now recites wherein the additional search terms are provided to the search process based upon word adjacency. Specific support for this feature can be found in the application as originally filed on page 14, lines 4-6. As set forth in that portion of the specification, an algorithmic approach to an end-word search string includes generating all two-word combinations based on word adjacency. Then all combinations are created, and the process is continued until a final end word combination is created. The specification indicates that, “a method of generating search words listed above will generate an additional  $[n-1]$   $[n/2]$  search words for a given  $n$ -word search string input.” Section 10 of the Office Action indicated that Franz/Even fails to explicitly teach the further limitation wherein the string includes  $n$  words, and wherein  $[n-1][n/2]$  additional search terms are provided to the search process. The Office Action then further asserts that the college Algebra reference discloses a formula that provides the same results as the formula set forth in dependent claim 9. In particular, the Office Action asserts that if the variable  $r$  is set to 2, then the formula for combinations provides the same result as the formula  $[n-1][n/2]$ . The Office Action then further asserts that it would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to set the variable  $r = 2$  in order to create a subset in the same manner as using an equation such as  $[n-1][n/2]$  to create a subset. Respectfully, one skilled in the art would only set the value  $r$  equal to 2 if only two-word combinations were desired. In distinct contrast, the method described on page 14 of the Office Action includes generating a number of two-word combinations, three-word combinations, etc.

The fact that the result of the two equations (that of combinations when R is set to 2) and (a formula set forth in dependent claim 9) is irrelevant. In order to better illustrate this distinction, Applicant has amended dependent claim 9 in order to set forth the feature wherein the additional search terms are based on word adjacency. Certainly, if the various combinations that could be conceived when R is set to 2 were derived, it would become apparent that word adjacency could not be maintained. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that one skilled in the art would not set  $R = 2$  because at least some combinations include more than two words. Additionally, Applicant respectfully submits that the College Algebra reference fails to teach or suggest maintaining word adjacency. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that dependent claim 9 is allowable over Franz, Even and the College Algebra reference, taken along or in combination.

Beginning on page 12 of the Office Action, claim 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Franz reference in view of U.S. Patent Application No. 2004/0205672 (hereinafter referred to as “the Bates reference”). Of these claims, claim 17 is independent and claim 18 is canceled with the present response. At least for reasons that will be described below in detail, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is patentably distinguishable from the cited references considered independently or in combination.

Independent claim 17 recites a method for making additional terms available to a searching process. The method includes receiving an input string that incorporates a plurality of characters separated by at least one space. At least one space is replaced with a hyphen to form at least one additional term (emphasis added). The additional term and the input string are provided to the searching process.

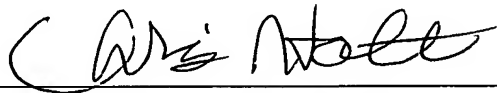
It is first submitted that the Examiner’s rejection of claim 17 falsely characterizes the Franz reference. For example, the Examiner points to column 8, lines 51-61 and says that this passage discloses providing additional search terms in the form of compound words. A close examination of this passage, however, reveals that, in fact, the Franz reference simply discloses transforming search terms. The Franz reference simply does not teach or suggest providing an input term to a searching process along with an additional term in which a space has been converted to a hyphen. The cited Bates reference does not remedy the failure of the Franz

reference to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 17. For at least these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that claim 17 is in allowable form.

In summary, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1, 13, 15, 17 and 19 are in allowable form. Further, it is also submitted that dependent claims 2-10 are also in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims are respectfully solicited. The Director is authorized to charge any fee deficiency required by this paper or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 23-1123.

Respectfully submitted,

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